

# Television News Content of Minority Groups as Contextual Factor of the Differences between Specific Prejudices

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Paper presented at the

**14<sup>th</sup> Dutch-Belgian Political Science Conference**

Maastricht, 11-12 June 2015

## **Abstract**

In this study, the main goal is to assess whether individuals differentiate in their attitudes toward minorities, and to ascertain whether distinct patterns in television news coverage for minority groups offer an explanation for these differences in prejudice. We evaluate this hypothesis by investigating the relationship between the content (tone, framing) of television news coverage of five minority groups (LGBT, Jews, Eastern Europeans, North Africans and Roma) and prejudice in Flanders, i.e. the Dutch-speaking region of Belgium. Results confirm that a hierarchy in prejudice exists: people differentiate between minority groups. The content analysis offers an indication that this hierarchy in prejudice is indeed reflected by patterns of media coverage for these minority groups: minorities that are most negatively evaluated by the public, receive the most negative media coverage, are consistently problematized, and are associated with threatening news frames, such as crime. Multilevel analyses show that a negative tone for minorities on television news is associated with more prejudice, whereas a positive tone is associated with less prejudice. Especially when news stories on minorities are framed through a criminal threat angle, prejudice toward that group is very high. The conclusion is that media content is an important contextual factor that should not be overlooked as it can contribute to the explanation of differences in prejudice.

**Key words:** Media, Minorities, Generalized prejudice, Specific prejudice, Hierarchy, Content Analysis, Television, Threat, Framing

## 1. Introduction

Empirical research has repeatedly shown that target-specific prejudices are highly associated: negative feelings toward one outgroup (e.g. immigrants) are likely to generalize to other outgroups (e.g. homosexuals), even though these outgroups are very dissimilar to each other (Allport, 1954; Zick et al., 2008). The fact that prejudices are so highly connected is often ascribed to individual differences in the personality structure of people (Ekehammar, Akrami, Gylje, & Zakrisson, 2004). The relationship between personality characteristics and generalized prejudice is very stable and seems to be largely unaffected by the intergroup context (Akrami, Ekehammar, Bergh, Dahlstrand, & Malmsten, 2009). This does not mean, however, that target-specific predispositions can be fully reduced to a prejudiced personality, implying the existence of triggers outside of the individual that make people more prone to certain types of prejudice compared to others. These external triggers make that people differentiate between groups, so that hierarchies in prejudices emerge (Hagendoorn, 1995). While previous research has almost exclusively focused on the origins of either generalized prejudice or a single target-specific prejudice, it remains unclear how *differences* in target-specific prejudice can be explained, in other words: why do people differentiate between groups?

The limited research on the topic suggests that individuals distinguish between target groups because of the specific intergroup context in which these attitudes develop (Akrami, Ekehammar, & Bergh, 2011; Sibley et al., 2013). Whether prejudice toward a certain group is triggered depends on the social, cultural, and institutional opportunities in a society (Hagendoorn, 1995; Koopmans & Olzak, 2004; Meeusen & Kern, 2015; Zick, Wolf, et al., 2008). Nevertheless, only little research has addressed how these sensitivities in the intergroup context implicitly or explicitly influence how people evaluate different minority groups. In this paper, we argue that the role of mass media is a crucial aspect of the intergroup context, because by lack of direct experiences with certain target groups, individuals often rely on secondary information sources such as news coverage (Fujioka, 1999; Vergeer, Lubbers, & Scheepers, 2000).

Content analysis and media effect studies have shown that negative stereotypes of minority groups in the news are widespread (Dixon & Linz, 2000; Entman, 1992; ter Wal, D'Haenens, & Koeman, 2005) and that consistent and repetitive exposure to these negative messages can activate feelings of threat, which translate into prejudice (Boomgaarden & Vliegenthart, 2009; Iyengar & Gilliam, 2000; Lubbers & Scheepers, 2000). The vast majority of these prior studies have adopted a single, non-differentiated approach focusing on one single group (often immigrants) without comparing news portrayals of different target groups (except for Lubbers, Scheepers & Wester, 1998). In this paper, we want to fill this gap by investigating whether news coverage on different target groups can explain why people differentiate in feelings of prejudice toward these groups. As

such, we aim to offer a media-based explanation for the existence of hierarchies between target-specific prejudices.

To shed light on this question, we systematically investigate minority portrayals in Flemish television news coverage for the period 2003-2014. Furthermore, we combine this longitudinal content analysis with survey data on five minority groups that are salient in the Belgian intergroup context: North-Africans, Eastern Europeans, LGBT, Jews, and Roma. We hypothesize that the tone and framing of news stories on minorities on television are strongly related to how people evaluate these groups. For example, if a minority group is consistently described as posing a criminal threat to society, prejudice toward that minority group will be specifically high as compared to a minority group that is not associated with criminal activities (Lubbers, Scheepers, & Wester, 1998).

## **2. News Coverage as a Contextual Predictor of Differences in Prejudices**

Abundant empirical evidence has shown that individuals hold a generalized tendency to devalue all kinds of outgroups, which is reflected by the high correlations between target-specific types of prejudice and has its origin in personality characteristics (Akrami et al., 2011; Allport, 1954; Zick, Wolf, et al., 2008). The presence of such a generalized prejudice component does not mean, however, that individuals evaluate all target groups in a similar vein (Akrami et al., 2009): some minority groups are evaluated more negatively or positively than others. Next to a general tendency to be tolerant or prejudiced, individuals intentionally differentiate in their judgements of target groups, which results in prejudice hierarchies (Hagendoorn, 1995; Verkuyten, Hagendoorn, & Masson, 1995). This implies that there are specific motives depending on the target group, which are fuelled by factors outside of one's personality. Intergroup literature suggests that perceived outgroup characteristics (e.g. socio-economic status of the group), situational (e.g. perceived threat, intergroup contact) and contextual factors (e.g. culture, policy, media) contribute to this rank order in prejudices, and can explain why people hold more prejudice toward one group than toward another group (Akrami et al., 2009; Havekes, Uunk, & Gijsberts, 2011; Stephan, 2008; Zick, Wolf, et al., 2008). Hagendoorn (1995) and Verkuyten et al. (1996), for example, found that Dutch majority members largely agreed on their perception of an ethnic hierarchy, and that this rank order was related to perceptions of threat and to the perceived socio-economic distance between the majority and minority group. Similarly, Havekes et al. (2011) showed that people are more positive toward outgroups when the cultural and educational distance is smaller.

An important contribution to the debate on prejudice hierarchies was offered by Lubbers et al. (1998, p. 417), who suggested that exposure to news media might 'construct a picture of differences between groups'. Indeed, in situations of precarious direct contact experiences, people need to rely on other types of information, such as mass media, to shape their opinions about minorities (Hagendoorn, 1995; Bobo, 1997). In this way mass media has the potential to become an

important socializing agent (Fujioka, 1999; Graves, 1999). The specific ways in which minorities are portrayed in the news can thus be highly instrumental in fostering intergroup attitudes.

A well-documented phenomenon by content analyses is that news depictions of minorities tend to be of a predominantly negative, stereotypical and problematizing nature (Boomgaarden & Vliegenthart, 2007; Dixon & Linz, 2002; Iyengar & Gilliam, 2000; ter Wal et al., 2005). As noted by Schemer (2012, p. 740): 'exposure to these sources of information is likely to perpetuate stereotypic attitudes toward ethnic minorities'. News depictions of minorities may thus contribute to prejudice, but in addition - and this has attracted almost no scholarly attention - these news portrayals may also provide an explanation for hierarchies in prejudice (Lubbers et al., 1998). News media may emphasize favourable or less favourable characteristics depending on the target group, thereby promoting differences in intergroup evaluations.

Departing from the observation that people discriminate between ethnic groups, Lubbers, et al. (1998) explicitly tested whether a similar ethnic hierarchy can be found in media messages. Content analysis of Dutch newspapers largely confirmed their hypothesis: Dutch majority members were less willing to interact with ethnic minority groups that were systematically more problematized in media coverage. Persistent association of specific minorities with problems in the news (whether or not they are the cause of the problem), may foster feelings of threat toward that group, which - due to processes of causal attribution - may result in harsher evaluations of these groups. In other words, if news differentiates in its coverage of minority groups, this differentiation might be picked up by the audience, resulting in a hierarchy of prejudices. Two aspects of media coverage are important in this regard: media tone and news framing. The way in which minority groups are framed by the news and the tone (positive or negative) of the news item highly impact interpretations of issues and as a consequence attitudes toward the groups (Sniderman & Theriault, 2004; Zaller, 1992, 1996; Balmas & Shaefer, 2010; Kim & McCombs, 2010; Scheufele & Tewksbury, 2007; Shen, Ahern, & Baker, 2014; Tankard, 2001). In this article, we assess both aspects of media coverage in combination to prejudice toward different minority groups.

### **2.1. Media Tone**

The tone of news items, i.e. the general valence or direction (positive or negative) of a news item, is considered important because it adds an affective component to news stories (Sheafer, 2007). Indeed, prior research has shown that the evaluative tone of media coverage greatly impacts the salience and interpretation of political issues and attitudes (Balmas & Sheafer, 2010; Kim & McCombs, 2007). The underlying idea is that information has the potential to alter public opinion in the direction of the dominant valence of a news item (Zaller, 1992). The process through which one-sided information may prompt changes in attitudes is described by the Receive-Accept-Response (RAS) model (Zaller, 1992): individuals' attitudes reflect the dominant tone of

information that one has received (R), e.g. via information in the news media, and has accepted (A). When questioned about their attitudes, individuals will endorse or oppose a certain view conditional upon the mix of positive or negative evaluations sampled (S) from the accepted information. In this way, exposure to one-directional information in the news on minorities can steer public opinion in the promoted way.

Positive and negative stories on minorities are thus anticipated to impact intergroup attitudes. Indeed, prior research has suggested that negative news stories focusing on problems linger in the public's mind, increasing its potential to influence public opinion on a variety of issues (Cho et al., 2003; Soroka, 2006; Young & Soroka, 2012). In a news environment marked by recurrent negative narratives, these negative messages are easily accessible (Zaller, 1992), possibly cultivating negative stereotypes in society. Exposure to negative news reports on immigration problematizing immigration issues, indeed led to an increase in hostile feelings toward immigrants (Boomgaarden & Vliegenthart, 2009; Dixon, 2008; Schemer, 2014; Schlueter & Davidov, 2013). The evidence, however, is not unequivocal, as a recent study comparing Denmark and the Netherlands found no relationship between negative news coverage and negative attitudes toward immigration (van Klinger, Boomgaarden, Vliegenthart, & de Vreese, 2014). They argue that negative news on immigration has become so widespread that the impact of this negative news environment remains minimal. On the other hand, some studies assert that positive news portrayals of minorities have the potential to reduce negative feelings toward minorities and thus form a buffer against prejudice (Boomgaarden & Vliegenthart, 2007; Schemer, 2012). Emphasis of positive exemplars in the news has been found to enforce the salience of a superordinate social identity, which has the potential to counter stereotype endorsement and hostile intergroup attitudes (Gaertner & Dovidio, 2000). The rationale presented above suggests that when television news stories on different minorities diverge in terms of its tone, e.g. with some minorities being depicted more positive or negative, this may contribute to differences in prejudice.

## **2.2. News Media Framing: The Role of Threat**

Although framing is subject of fierce academic debate, some common elements of what media framing exactly presents can be distinguished. Generally, news framing refers to *how* issues are being presented in the news (De Vreese, 2005; Scheufele & Tewksbury, 2007). Frames are 'central organizing ideas' that give meaningful insights to an issue; as such, framing implies that certain aspects of a news story are being emphasized, favouring some interpretations over others (Gamson, 1989). Indeed, as Entman (1993) notes: frames can stimulate certain problem definitions, cause diagnoses, moral judgments and remediation strategies. In line with Entman's definition, we are mainly concerned with the role of problematization in news frames of minorities. Are minorities

in the news associated with problems? If so, are they depicted as cause of the problem? How does this differ between minority groups, and how is this related to minority evaluations?

Following the integrated process model of framing (De Vreese, 2005), we opt for a deductive approach and construct pre-defined news frames on the basis of available literature on intergroup relations. We opt for issue-specific frames as we are particularly interested in patterns of minority depictions in the news. The rich literature on intergroup relations presents an excellent point of departure to construct these issue-specific news frames. Much scholarly attention has been paid to unravelling the causes of prejudice toward minorities (Allport, 1954; Ceobanu & Escandell, 2010; Helbling, 2014; Rustenbach, 2010; Wagner, Christ, Pettigrew, Stellmacher, & Wolf, 2006). One of the main guiding concepts in intergroup relations literature is the perceived threat stemming from minorities as fundamental cause for hostile feelings (McLaren & Johnson, 2007; Scheibner & Morrison, 2009). Intergroup threat, as reviewed by Riek, Mania and Gaertner (2006, p. 336), occurs 'when one group's actions, beliefs, or characteristics challenge the goal attainment or well-being of another group'. Generally, economic, cultural and criminal sources of threat can be identified. Socio-economic threat refers to material competition between majority and minority members over scarce goods, such as housing, jobs and welfare. Minorities are perceived as placing a burden on the economy and less deserving of social support (Burns & Gimpel, 2000; Hainmueller & Hiscox, 2010; Schneider, 2008). Cultural threat takes place at a more symbolic and abstract level, implying that the majority population feels threatened by the perceived incompatibility of distant cultures and religions, and by seemingly conflicting norms and values (McLaren & Johnson, 2007; Sides & Citrin, 2007). Finally, feelings of threat can be prompted by feelings of insecurity and fear caused by the perceived overrepresentation of minorities in criminal activities (Dinas & van Spanje, 2011; Fitzgerald, Curtis, & Corliss, 2011). The discussion on which type of threat is most instrumental in explaining negative attitudes toward minorities is not settled yet, as evidence is being inconclusive. Some claim that cultural threat overrules economic threat (Hainmueller & Hiscox, 2010; McLaren & Johnson, 2007; Sides & Citrin, 2007), whereas other studies emphasize direct competition for economic and social resources, (Gorodzeisky, 2011; Malhotra, Margalit, & Mo, 2013), anxiety, and fear of crime (Dinas & van Spanje, 2011; Fitzgerald et al., 2011). Other authors have stressed that economic and cultural threat coexist, as they are driven by different needs and fulfil different goals (Ben-Nun Bloom, Arikan, & Lahav, forthcoming).

Paralleling this debate and building on literature on intergroup threat, we will therefore distinguish between three types of threat frames - cultural, economic and criminal threat frames - and investigate which frames are used for different minority groups, how these frames are related with public opinion on minorities and which type of threat is decisive in this regard. Prior research by Lubbers et al. (1998) emphasized the importance of criminalization processes in mass media while explaining ethnic hierarchies. There are indeed reasons to expect that especially criminal

threat frames play a powerful role in explaining minority attitudes. First, they can be considered more blatant expressions of stereotyping processes (Pettigrew & Meertens, 1995). They are more likely to be unambiguously negative (Zaller, 1992), focusing on social disorder and problems, while economic and cultural frames more often include a nuanced point of view. Moreover, crime stories are typically framed in an episodic way, highlighting concrete events and ignoring contextual factors, thereby fostering individualistic responsibility attribution, which is less the case for other topics (Iyengar, 1991). Crime is also more suitable topic for television stories, because it is 'sensational' in nature, and because crime stories easily lend themselves to emotional appeals (Grabe, Zhou, & Barnett, 2001; Uribe & Gunter, 2007). This all suggests that criminal threat frames on television may be more decisive in increasing negative feelings toward minorities than economic and cultural threat frames.

### 3. The Present Study

#### 3.1. Research question

In the present study, we propose a media-based explanation for differences between target-specific prejudices. We hypothesize that differences in television news content on different minority groups can explain why people differentiate in feelings of prejudice toward these groups. In this way, we contribute both theoretically and methodologically to the debate on news content as influencing factor in the intergroup context of individuals.

From a theoretical point of view, we explicitly bring in media content as a predictor of differences in prejudice by systematically analysing news coverage for five diverse minority groups: LGBT, Jews, North-Africans, Eastern Europeans and Roma. This allows for an assessment whether minorities are all subject to negative media coverage or whether this holds for specific minority groups only (Bleich, Stonebraker, Nisar, & Abdelhamid, 2015; Lubbers et al., 1998). Two aspects of media content are analysed: media tone and threatening news frames. To our knowledge, we are the first to integrate insights from intergroup threat literature in the construction of media frames. Moreover, past studies have generally limited their analysis on minority coverage by only selecting news on contested issues or problems (e.g. integration issues and minority rights) (Boomgaarden & Vliegenthart, 2009; Schemer, 2012; Schlueter & Davidov, 2013). We believe, however, it is important to consider *all* news stories in which references are made to minorities (e.g. in everyday situations) as these may also strongly shape public perceptions of minority groups (ter Wal et al., 2005). We therefore include all news stories with a reference to minority groups.

From a methodological point of view, we also make a number of contributions. First, while the vast majority of past studies have focused on newspapers, we consider television news. Recent figures show that television newscasts in Europe are the 'first' source consumed by the audience

to absorb information about politics and policy issues, rendering television a large potential to shape public opinion (Eurobarometer, 2012). Second, while past studies have relied on data resulting from small samples of several weeks, this study uses a dataset which covers every reference to the five minority groups in the news from 2003 until 2014, filtering out the impact of coincidental variation. This presents a substantial advantage as we can model long-term consequences of media exposure. Third, studies on media coverage and prejudice often rely on self-reported media exposure without actual media content data. This can be problematic because of inaccuracies in judgment and recall, and general over reporting of news consumption (Prior, 2009a, 2009b). To address this shortcoming, we combine content analysis with survey data on minorities. More specifically, we rely on Belgian survey data including feeling thermometers on the five minority groups.

### **3.2. Summary of hypotheses**

First, we expect that next to generalized prejudice tendency, individuals still differentiate between minority groups so that different levels of prejudice per minority group can be observed (Hypothesis 1). Second, in a similar vein, we expect that television news content for minority groups differs between minority groups in terms of media tone and the use of threat frames (Hypothesis 2). In a next step, we formally test whether target-specific television news coverage can offer an explanation why individuals differentiate between minorities. More specifically, we hypothesize that the more often a minority group is portrayed in news items with a positive tone, the more positive the feelings toward that group (Hypothesis 3a). Similarly, the more often a minority group is portrayed in news items with a negative tone, the more negative the feelings toward that group (Hypothesis 3b). Regarding the use of threat frames, we expect that the more often a minority group is portrayed in news items with a criminal threat frame, as compared to economic or cultural threat frames, the more negative the feelings toward that group (Hypothesis 4).

### **3.3. The Belgian context**

These research questions and hypotheses will be evaluated by relying on evidence from Flanders, i.e. the Dutch-speaking part of Belgium. Although Belgium can be considered as a multicultural and egalitarian society, prejudices toward groups that differ from the mainstream majority group are still widespread and sometimes among the highest in Western Europe (Zick, Pettigrew, & Wagner, 2008). As Belgium has a history of immigration, with guest workers mainly coming from Italy, Turkey, Morocco and recently from Eastern Europe, prejudice is often directed toward the immigrant population. Similarly, due to several rounds of EU enlargement, borders are shifting, making the free movement of persons a new reality for Western Europe. Not only ethnic groups are subject to negative feelings and discrimination, also cultural or religiously-inspired



groups, like Jews and LGBT, are often target of prejudice and violent behaviour, even though they are granted equal rights (e.g. same-sex marriage legislation, separate Jewish schools system) (FRA, 2013; Gerhards, 2010; Hooghe & Meeusen, 2013).

The media system in Belgium reflects the complex institutional context. Belgium is a federal state in which three language groups are present, i.e. the Flemish, French-speaking and German-speaking communities. Over the years, many competences have been transferred to the regional level via a gradual federalisation process (Deschouwer, 2009). Since the 1970s, media policy falls under the communities' authority, which led to the development of two large and distinct media systems: the Flemish and French-speaking community each have their own newspapers, tabloids, radio and television stations, and generally media consumption across the linguistic border is limited (Sinardet, 2013). In this paper, we focus on the media system of the Flemish language group, the largest language group in Belgium. Despite rapid developments in the media landscape such as the rise of social media, news broadcasts in Flanders continue to attract large market shares, rendering these newscasts important socialization potential. From a comparative point of view, the Flemish television landscape presents by no means an exceptional case, and can be considered representative for other Western European societies as well. In Flanders, as in many other Western European countries, a strong public broadcaster co-exists along with commercial players in a fragmented television market. Moreover, also in terms of television consumption patterns, and general trends in the media environment (e.g. rise of social media, austerity, etc.), Flanders presents no deviant example (European Audiovisual Observatory, 2014).

#### **4. Data & Methods**

To assess the relationship between television news content and attitudes toward minorities, quantitative content analysis is combined with individual-level survey data.

##### **4.1. Content Analysis**

**Sample.** For the content analysis, we rely on 1,487 television news items reporting about five minority groups (North-Africans, Jews, Eastern Europeans, LGBT and Roma) on the prime time news broadcasts of the two main television stations from January 2003 until May 25<sup>th</sup> (Election day, see survey data). The data are obtained from the Electronic News Archive (ENA), which is one of the largest digital news archives available for scientific research in Belgium. Since 2003, the major news broadcasts of the Flemish public broadcasting station, VRT, and of the main Flemish commercial station, VTM, are daily archived, coded and analysed. Both newscasts attract large audiences on a daily basis: in 2014, the average market share was 23.3% for VRT and 16.9% for VTM (CIM TV, 2014). There are virtually no other Flemish newscasts that reach comparable amounts of

viewers. Inter-coder reliability tests for these codings are conducted on a regular basis, showing that reliability of the coding is generally up to standard (De Smedt, Wouters, & De Swert, 2013).

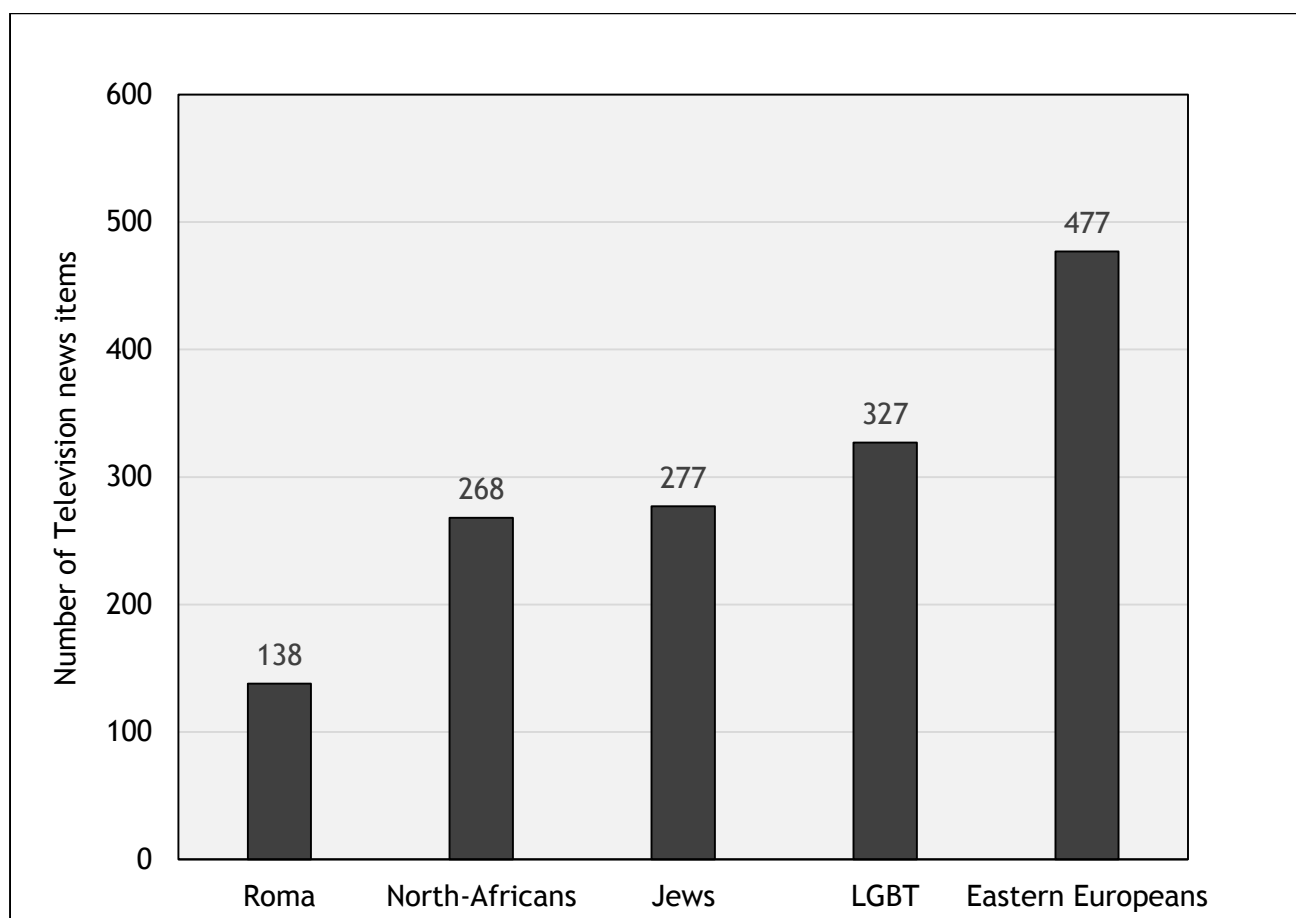
The selected time frame, January 2003 until May 2014, is partly due to data availability, but also entails several important methodological and theoretical advantages in light of the study's purpose. First, including twelve years of news content allows us to reach a sufficient sample size to study media coverage for underrepresented groups in the media (such as Roma), which would be impossible with a limited sample of several weeks, months, or even years. Second, in the selected time period there have been societal developments and events with regard to minorities and minority policy, allowing for sufficient variation in terms of media content. Third, twelve years of media coverage brings along a huge socialization potential as we include every occasion these minority groups received attention on the news. In this way, media coverage for these minorities can be thought of as prevailing narrative or information environment (Boomgaarden & Vliegenthart, 2009; Jerit, Barabas, & Bolsen, 2006).<sup>1</sup>

For each news item the headline or general description (generally the literal headline as read by the news anchor) was recorded, as well as several keywords describing the news item. To select all television news coverage of the five minority groups, we developed a string of relevant search terms for each minority group (see Appendix A). Using this search string, all news items containing a reference to the minority in either the description or keywords were selected. This selection was done manually, allowing careful inspection in order to avoid possible erroneous news items. Moreover, we only included domestic news as we agree with the argument by ter Wal, d'Haenens and Koeman (2005) that the operationalization of minorities is dependent upon the specific context. An important caveat that should be mentioned here is that only television news items containing an explicit reference to the selected minority groups were taken into account. A crime story featuring a perpetrator who is identified as carrying an Arabic name, for instance, without explicit reference to nationality, origin or ethnicity, is not included in the media data. Figure 1 gives an overview of the distribution of television news articles for the five minority groups: generally the most television news items were broadcasted on Eastern Europeans (477), followed by LGBT (327). The amount of television news items on Jews (277) and North-Africans (268) was more or less the same. The least visible group are the Roma (138).

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<sup>1</sup> To test the robustness of our findings, we performed all analyses with media content indicators of a shorter time period of six years (2008-2014). Results were very similar, so that relations between media coverage and prejudice were not specific to the observed period. We opted for to include media content variables for the longer period because this way more variance in the news items could be obtained.

**Figure 1:** Number of Television News Items on Minorities on Primetime Television News 2003-2014



Note. Entries are absolute number of television news items between January 2003 and May 2014 containing at least one reference to the minority group.

**Coding and Inter-Coder Reliability.** The coding instrument was developed building on prior studies investigating the relationship between media coverage and prejudice. The coding was conducted by the authors of this study. During the training period, several test news items were independently coded. The codings for the variables were then compared to identify any discrepancies. Ambiguous news items were more closely analysed by watching the news item together, and through discussion a joint decision on the coding was reached. In line with common procedure, inter-coder reliability was evaluated by double-coding almost 10% of the sample. Krippendorff's Alpha coefficients for all variables included in the analysis were above the minimum value of .67, with an average of .80, which is considered satisfactory (Krippendorff, 2013).

**Variables.** Two television news content variables were coded: media tone, and the use of threat frames. The *tone* of a television news item was coded using the following question: 'Overall, would you say the news item has a positive, negative, mixed or neutral tone?' (van Klinger et al., 2014). In addition, we adopted the strategy as proposed by Lubbers et al. (1998) that it is also important

to assess whether the negativity or problem in a news item is caused by the minority group or not. We therefore distinguish between negative news items that deal with a problem caused by the minority group and problems not caused by the minority group. An example may clarify this: a news story on crime is coded as 'negative', but the negativity is not necessarily caused by the minority group member if s/he is the victim. It is our aim to correct for this nuance. Moreover, it adds to our understanding, as it is relevant to know whether pure association with a negative story is enough to negatively influence minority evaluations, or whether especially minorities as cause of the negativity has a large impact (Lubbers et al., 1998). We included the media tone for a minority in the analysis as percentage of the total amount of media coverage for this minority group on the newscast. Following variables were created for each minority group: % negative news, % positive news, % minority group is cause of the problem.

For the *threat frames*, we deductively developed issue-specific frames relying on literature on intergroup relations. Generally, minorities are associated with three types of threat: economic, cultural and criminal threat. To operationalize these threat frames, we first coded whether the news item dealt with crime, economic issues or cultural issues. It was possible that more than one frame was applicable to one news story. Second, it was coded whether the news item dealt with a problem or not. If this was the case, subsequently coders had to indicate whether minorities were portrayed as cause of this problem or not. Threat frames are the combination of a criminal, economic or cultural frame with a problem presented as caused by minorities. They were taken up as percentages of the total amount of media coverage for the minority group on the newscast. As such, three threat frame variables were constructed for each minority group: % criminal threat frame, % economic threat frame, % cultural threat frame. Examples of tone and frame for each minority group can be found in Appendix B.

## 4.2. Survey Data

**Sample.** The survey data that are linked to the media content analysis stem from the fourth wave of the Belgian Election Panel 2009-2014 (Dassonneville, Falk Pedersen, Grieb, & Hooghe, 2014). Attitudes toward the different minority groups were only measured in the fourth wave of the study, as part of a pre-election survey (25<sup>th</sup> of March-25<sup>th</sup> of May 2014). In 2009, a geographically stratified sample of 4,863 Belgian voters was randomly selected from the Belgian National Register. In 2014, the full 2009 address-sample was updated by the National Register so that 4,448 respondents could be re-contacted for participation.<sup>2</sup> After three reminders, a total of 1,542 (or 34.4%) valid surveys were returned to the university. Due to this rather low response rate, generalizations to the whole Belgian population are not warranted. For the purpose of this study,

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<sup>2</sup> Some respondents could not be re-contacted because they passed away or migrated to another country.

only the Flemish subsample was used ( $N = 853$ ), as we only coded television news content from the two main Flemish news broadcasters.

**Variables.** The dependent variable - negative feelings toward minority groups - was measured with a feeling thermometer scale. Respondents were asked to rate the five minority groups (North-Africans, Jews, Eastern Europeans, LGBT and Roma) on a 0 to 100 scale, with higher numbers indicating more positive feelings toward the minority group. In this way, negative feelings toward the different groups could directly be compared. Next, to safeguard us from finding spurious effects and to control for possible self-selection mechanisms, some important control variables known to be correlated with prejudice and media consumption were included in the analysis: gender (49.39% male), education level (6-point scale, 1 = 'no degree', 6 = 'university degree, mean = 4.19, SD = 1.15), age (range 23 - 94, mean = 54.70, SD = 16.27), left-right ideology (0 = 'left, 5 = 'centre', 10 = 'right', mean = 5.32, SD = 2.27), frequency of television news consumption (6-point scale, 1 = 'never', 6 = 'daily', mean = 4.94, SD = 1.47), and the frequency of other news media consumption (newspaper, news websites, and radio news, 6-point scale, 1 = 'never', 6 = 'daily', mean = 4.10, SD = 1.24).

#### 4.3. Method

In order to link the media content with the survey data, the data file was restructured into a two-level design, in which the feeling thermometer ratings of the five minority groups are nested within the individuals. In this way, variance at the individual level (level 2) refers to differences in negative feelings averages across all minority groups between individuals. Variance at the minority group level (level 1) refers to differences in negative feelings between the five minority groups within the same respondent. Because we expected television news content to be related to differences in evaluations between minority groups, the media content variables were entered at level 1. All control variables were entered at level 2, as they are respondent-specific and thus refer to differences between individuals and not within individuals.

Similar to Hopmann et al. (2010) and Schemer (2012) media content indicators were matched with respondents, depending on the specific television news broadcaster the respondent prefers. In an open question, respondents were asked which television news broadcast they had watched most during the last two weeks: Among the respondents who answered the question ( $N = 33$  missing), 7.6% had not watched any television news, 63.9% watched public news, 22.4% watched commercial news, and 6.1% watched both public and commercial news. For example, if a respondent indicated to watch public news, he or she was matched with the media content indicators of public news for each minority group. A respondent who watches both commercial and public news, was assigned the average of the media content indicators of both broadcasts.

Respondents who did not watch any news at all were not included in the analyses as there were no media data to match (N = 50) (Hopmann et al., 2010). Among this group differences in negative feelings cannot be attributed to distinct patterns in television news exposure. Furthermore, because we analysed media content over a twelve-year period, we only included respondents older than 29 (thus respondents who were 18 at the start of the content analysis) as we cannot assume that children or adolescents already closely followed the news (N = 65)<sup>3</sup>, resulting in a sample of N = 705 respondents. Appendix C provides an example of the data structure and the linkage of the survey data with the content analytical variables.

Because of the nested structure of the data a range of multilevel analyses were performed. To avoid multicollinearity, the television news content variables were tested in separate models. Multiple imputation was used to deal with item nonresponse (Schafer & Graham, 2002). To correct for the slight underrepresentation of the lower educated and women, weights were applied in the analyses.<sup>4</sup> All continuous variables were grand mean centred. Analyses were done in Mplus 7.3 making use of a maximum likelihood estimation with clustered robust standard errors.

## 5. Results

### 5.1. Differences in prejudice among individuals and television news content

We start the analysis by ascertaining whether there is indeed evidence of a hierarchy in prejudice. Figure 2 displays the mean scores of positive feelings for the five minority groups. We can conclude that individuals indeed differentiate between minorities, which confirms hypothesis 1: some groups are evaluated more positively or negatively than others. Generally, attitudes are rather favourable toward LGBT, closely followed by Jews. Feelings toward ethnic minorities are more negative. North Africans and Eastern Europeans are rated equally negative; Roma are disliked the most.

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<sup>3</sup> Replicating the analyses including all age groups provided almost identical results.

<sup>4</sup> Weights were calculated based on the population data provided by the Federal Public Service Economy in 2013 as the 2014 data were not yet publically available. Weights range from .74 (women with a university degree) to 2.95 (women without a degree). Weighted and unweighted results were very similar, leading to the same conclusions.

**Figure 2: Average levels of positive feelings toward different minority group**

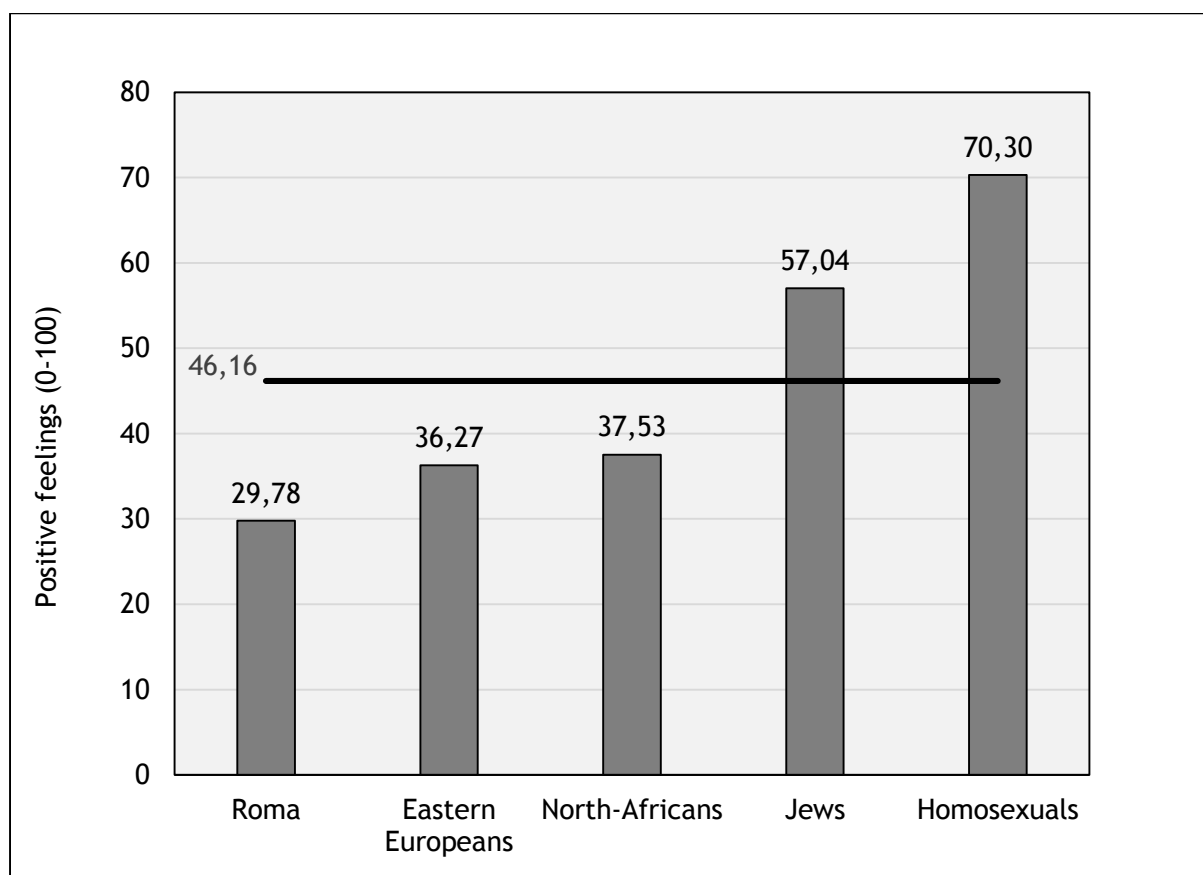
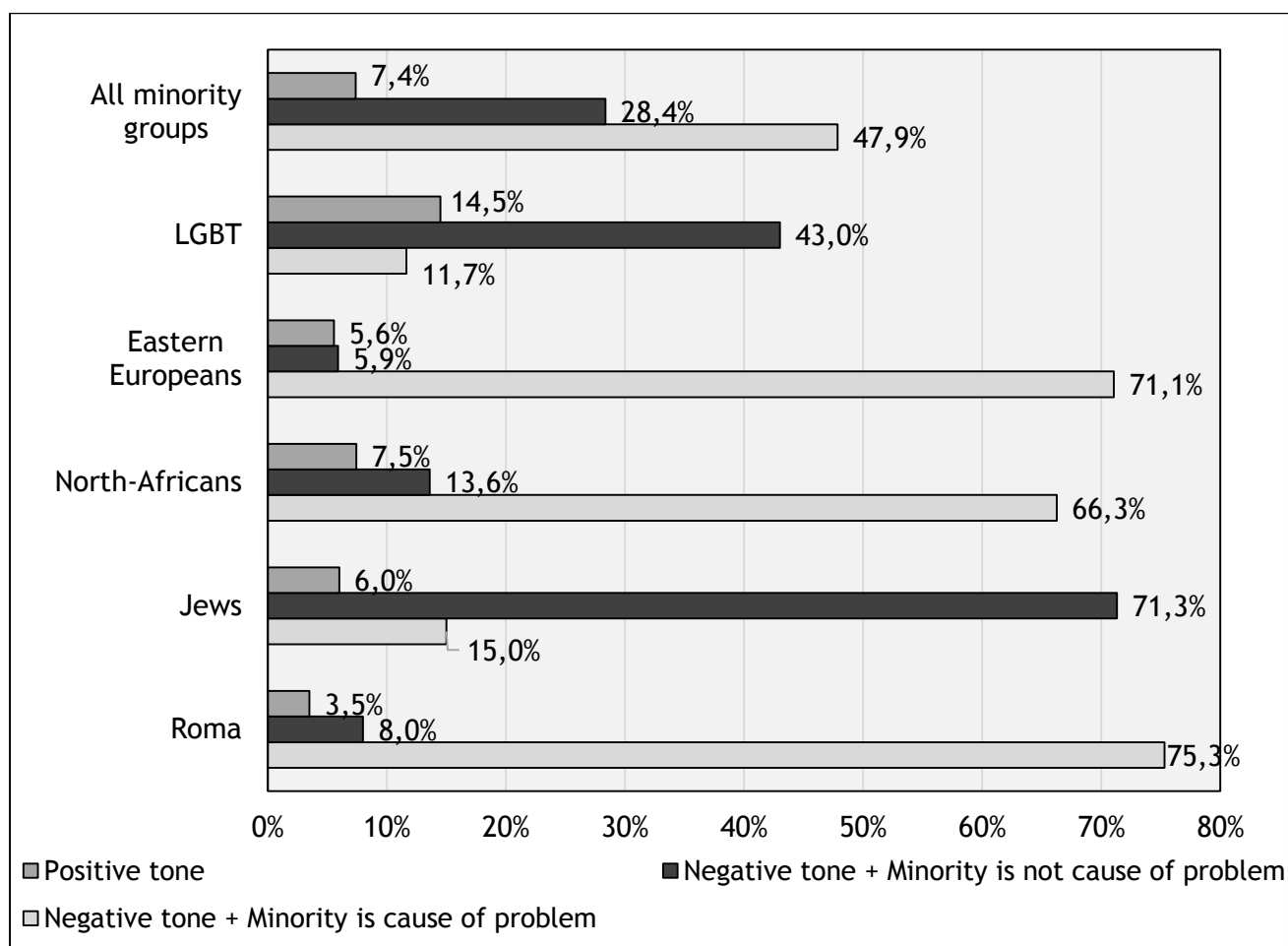


Figure 3 and 4 display the media content for the different minority groups. Figure 3 compares the media tone for the different minority groups. We can observe that in general, for all minority groups, positive news stories are scarce: only a minority of the television news stories (7.4%) has a positive tone. The group that receives the most positive television news coverage are LGBT, although even here only 14.5% of the news stories has a positive tone. On the contrary, minority groups are subject to highly negative television news coverage. The evidence thus points to the direction of a negativity bias in television news reports on minority groups. We can observe, however, that the strength of this negativity bias in terms of media tone is conditional upon the type of minority group as there are large differences between the groups. Especially television news items on ethnic minority groups - Roma, North-Africans and Eastern-Europeans - more often have a negative tone than items on LGBT and Jews. A negative tone refers to all news stories with a negative tone, regardless of attribution of responsibility for a problem to a minority group member. When assessing only news items with a negative tone in which minorities are portrayed as cause of the problem, we find that the ethnic minority groups are often depicted as causing the problem described in the negative news item. LGBT and Jews are also often portrayed in news stories with a negative tone, but they are seldom depicted as cause of the problem. Roma receive the most negative media coverage.

**Figure 3. Media Tone for Minorities on Primetime Television News 2003-2014**

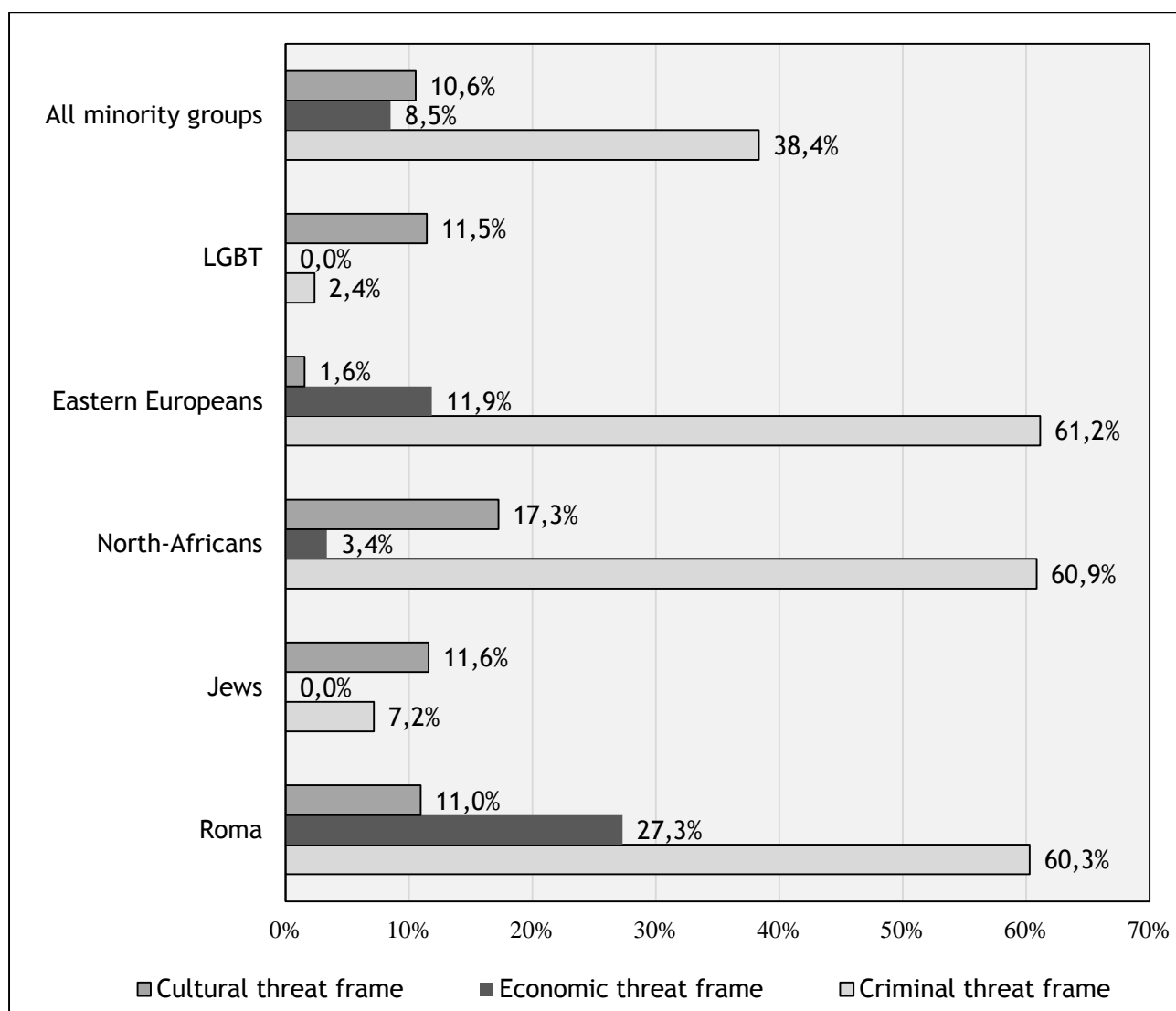


Note. Entries are percentages for media tone relative to the number of total television news stories about the minority group on the newscast (2003-2014). Television news items with mixed and neutral tone are not included in the Figure (results can be requested from authors).

Threat is a common ingredient in television news coverage of minorities. Half of the television news stories on the minorities contains at least one reference to threat. Figure 4 compares the use of threat frames on television news between the minority groups. Criminal threat frames are the most prevalent in television news, followed by cultural and economic threat frames. However, as with media tone, distinct patterns in threat frame use between the minority groups can be noted. Jews and LGBT are less often shown in threat frames, and are most commonly associated with a cultural threat. Eastern Europeans, North-Africans and especially Roma, by contrast, are very frequently portrayed in threat frames, and especially references to criminal threat are high. Eastern Europeans and Roma are also depicted in economic threat frames, while North-Africans are relatively often associated with cultural threat frames.



**Figure 4. Media Threat Frames for Minorities on Primetime Television News 2003-2014**



Note: Entries are percentages for media threat frames relative to the number of total news stories about the minority groups on the newscast (2003-2014). Threat frames do not sum to 100%, as combinations of threat frames in one news items were possible.

From these descriptive data we can conclude that positive news is scarce, that negative news is dominant, and that there are indeed large differences in media coverage for minority groups. Especially ethnic minority groups are often portrayed with a negative tone and presented as the cause of the problem. Moreover, criminal threat frames are a frequent ingredient in television news on these ethnic minorities. There is thus evidence of a hierarchy in television news content for minorities, and this supports hypothesis 2. Moreover, comparing these content data with the prejudice hierarchy found among the respondents already shows large similarities: the groups that are more often subject to negative news frames, are also most negatively evaluated by the respondents.

## 5.2. Television News Content as a Contextual Factor of a Differences in Prejudice

In a next step, we formally tested this preliminary finding by directly linking the media content indicators with survey research to test hypothesis 3a and 3b (media tone) and hypothesis 4 (the use of threat frames). As outlined in the Method section, this was done by creating a nested data structure and by applying multilevel modelling. The baseline intercept model indicates that 31.0% of the variance in negative feelings can be attributed to differences between individuals and a substantial 69.0% to differences in ratings between minority groups. This again confirms that individuals indeed differentiate between minority groups. Before looking at the media content data, we first briefly describe the results of the individual-level characteristics (see Table 1). Women, higher educated and younger respondents have more positive feelings toward minority groups in general. The coefficients are easy to interpret, for example: everything else being equal, women rate minority groups on average around four degrees higher than men on a 0-100 degree thermometer. Left-wing respondents are also more positive toward minority groups in general. Frequency of watching television news and other news media consumption are not related to minority appraisals.

Next, we turn to the relation between television news content and differences in minority evaluations. As hypothesized, the more often a minority group is portrayed in news items with a positive tone, the more positive the feelings toward that group (Model A). Similarly, the more frequent a minority group is negatively depicted by the news, the less positive attitudes toward that group (Model B). the analysis thus provides support for hypotheses 3a and 3b. In Model C we added some nuance to the media tone analysis by assessing whether a negative news story is sufficient to negatively influence minority ratings, or whether the minority needs to be represented as cause of the problem in the negative story as well. The significant interaction shows portraying the minority group as the cause of the negative news story reinforces the negative feelings toward that group. However, whether or not the minority group is the cause of negativity, being depicted in a negative frame still reduces positive feelings toward the group. Finally, we hypothesized that minority groups that are more often framed as a criminal threat are rated more negatively than groups portrayed in any different type of threat frame. This was indeed the case, as the effect of criminal threat frames was larger than the effect of the economic and cultural threat frames (Model D) (Wald-tests  $p < .001$ ). Hypothesis 4 is thus supported by the analysis.

In terms of the overall research question, we can conclude that even when controlling for individual background characteristics, television news content indeed explains why individuals differentiate between minority groups<sup>5</sup>.

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<sup>5</sup> Additional analyses showed that the relationship between media content and prejudice was stable for each type of broadcast, so that differences between the media content of the two broadcasts were less important than the differences in media content of the minority groups

**Table 2.** Multi-level model for TV news coverage and positive feelings toward minorities

	Model A Positive tone		Model B Negative tone		Model C Negative tone + causality problem		Model D Threat frame	
	<i>B</i>	<i>SE</i>	<i>B</i>	<i>SE</i>	<i>B</i>	<i>SE</i>	<i>B</i>	<i>SE</i>
Intercept	39.591***	2.368	39.673***	2.357	40.259***	2.299	39.825***	2.282
<i>Level 1: Media coverage</i>								
Positive tone	2.924***	.103						
Negative tone			-.858***	.036	-.529***	.057		
Minority is cause problem					-.402***	.017		
Negative tone * Minority is cause problem					-.004*	.002		
Criminal threat frame							-.469***	.020
Economic threat frame							-.259***	.032
Cultural threat frame							-.161***	.049
<i>Level 2: Individual-level controls</i>								
Female	4.029*	1.557	4.017*	1.552	3.967**	1.494	3.982**	1.509
Age	-.299***	.065	-.273***	.064	-.240***	.066	-.217***	.066
Education level	2.432**	.847	2.901***	.832	3.327***	.805	3.727***	.806
Left-right ideology	-1.376***	.376	-1.463***	.375	-1.504***	.364	-1.571***	.368
Freq. other news	-.176	.743	.172	.741	.000	.700	.273	.714
Freq. TV news	1.122	.816	.955	.814	1.020	.807	.864	.816
Level 1 variance	447.545		507.765		339.003		353.482	
Level 2 variance	250.643		233.832		265.394		267.423	
Intra-class correlation	.318		.309		.341		.348	
AIC	32480		32826		31686		31814	
BIC	32541		32887		32760		31888	

Note. Entries are weighted unstandardized robust maximum likelihood estimations.  $N_{\text{individuals}} = 705$ .

\* $p < .05$ , \*\* $p < .01$ , \*\*\* $p < .001$

## 6. Discussion

The primary aim of this study was to offer a media-based explanation for differences between target-specific prejudices. The main research question was whether individuals differentiate between minorities, and whether distinct patterns in television news content for minority groups provides an explanation for this hierarchy in prejudice. We evaluated this hypothesis by combining television news content (i.e. the tone and framing) of five minority groups (LGBT, Jews, Eastern Europeans, North Africans and Roma) and subjective evaluations of these minority groups. Three main findings are particularly noteworthy: First, the results confirmed existence of a hierarchy in prejudice: people clearly differentiate between minority groups, as some groups are subject to more negative attitudes than others. Second, the content analysis revealed a differential media treatment for the five minority groups in line with the hierarchy in prejudice: the same minorities that are most negatively evaluated by the public are generally depicted very negatively in the news, are repeatedly problematized and associated with threat frames. Third, combining this content analytical data with survey data formally confirmed that television news content (i.e. media tone and news frames) on different minority groups can explain why people differentiate in feelings of prejudice toward these groups.

These results highlight the importance of television news content in the formation of target-specific prejudice. The ways in which minority groups are depicted by the media is part of the specific intergroup context that affects people's attitudes: media content offers people a specific motivation to discriminate between groups. Television news content greatly diverges in terms of media tone and references to threat for different minority groups, and these distinct patterns impact public perceptions of outgroup characteristics. In this way, news portrayals of minorities promote intergroup differences, and subsequently give rise to socially shared representations of these minority groups. This finding has implications for future research: the fact that news content tends to be conditional on the type of minority group suggests that one should be careful in drawing wide conclusion based on a non-differentiated approach in favour of an approach which allows for nuance regarding different minority groups.

Linking the media content analysis with the survey data provided some important insights for prejudice research. First, regarding media tone, the overall picture emerging from the television news content is quite pessimistic for ethnic minorities. Despite large differences between minorities, there is clear evidence pointing to the presence of a negativity bias in television content. From a normative perspective this is a reason for concern, as the analysis indeed shows that these negative depictions are powerful predictors of prejudice. Moreover, even when minorities are not attributed responsibility, the mere association of minorities with a problem - in line with causal attribution theory - is enough to trigger negative feelings. Still, especially when minorities are portrayed as having caused a problem, this results in very negative evaluations. This implies that

the way in which issues are framed in terms of responsibility are relevant, which corroborates Iyengar's (1991) conclusions that news stories play a large role in the attribution of responsibility and that especially lack of balance of news coverage in this regard, seems to be highly instrumental in stimulating prejudicial beliefs.

Second, an innovating feature of our analysis was the application of pre-defined issue-specific threat frames to news content on minorities to identify which type of threat was more strongly related to negative feelings. In this regard, we assessed the impact of cultural, economic and criminal threat frames as these are the most common sources of threat drawing from literature on intergroup relations. In line with our expectations, results show that especially when news stories on minorities are framed through a criminal angle, promoting a cognitive association between the minority group and crime, the public develops negative feelings toward that group. This may be because criminal news stories are very easy to interpret, and because the depiction of minorities as criminal human beings can be considered more 'blatant' forms of stereotypes (Pettigrew & Meertens, 1995). Moreover, in crime stories responsibility for the problem is usually straightforward, whereas in news stories on cultural and economic threat responsibility attribution is more diffuse. An explanation may thus be that criminal news stories are less balanced in nature, and more uniformly negative, which is in line with the media effects literature claiming that especially uni-directional negative news stories are extremely well-suited to shape public opinion (Young & Soroka, 2012; Zaller, 1992). Future research should have a closer look at the extent to which the composition and formulation of these threat frames differs to pinpoint exactly how the framing affects the attitudes.

Third, on a more optimistic note, the results do show that positive news stories on minority groups have a great potential to foster favourable attitudes toward those minorities. Still, the amount of positive news stories remains scarce. This highlights the potential role news media can play in promoting tolerance, but at the same time it suggests that current policy instruments, such as the maintenance of quota or target figures by public broadcasters, may fall short in this regard. Some doubts can be casted about the utility and efficacy of such quota, as this study shows that the content of news stories greatly matters. Authorities should thus envision in future media policies to have more attention to the quality of news portrayal of minority groups as well.

Fourth, the divergent pattern in media content between minorities seems to follow a clear division: it seems that ethnic minority groups (North Africans, Eastern Europeans and Roma) are consistently and repeatedly subject to more negative, less positive and more threatening news content than religious or cultural minority groups (LGBT and Jews). Especially the association of ethnic minorities with criminal threat frames on television news is striking. The negativity bias in news reporting thus holds particularly for ethnic minority groups. Systematic negative news reports may have serious consequences for intergroup relations with ethnic minorities.

Some limitations of this study need to be acknowledged. First, differences between specific types of prejudice were explained relying only on media content indicators. There are many other situational and contextual indicators - such as intergroup contact, outgroup salience, social policies - that may explain why prejudice toward one minority groups is triggered and not toward the other. Future research would benefit from including a wider range of prejudices triggers and assessing them simultaneously. Moreover, as was evident from the analysis, media content is dependent on the minority groups under study. Therefore, future research should investigate a different set of minority groups to assess the robustness of the findings.

Second, although we had news coverage indicators for a twelve-year period, unfortunately we could only rely on cross-sectional survey data. Hence, no time-lag fluctuations in intergroup attitudes could be taken into account. We also assumed that individuals who reported to regularly watch commercial or public television news in 2014, had the same news consumption pattern twelve years ago. While this is a very strong assumption, additional analyses showed that the relationship between media content and prejudice was stable for each type of broadcast, so that differences between the media content of the two broadcasts were less important than the differences in media content of the minority groups. Furthermore, including a twelve-year period still offers advantages as media content for a specific minority group can be considered as a prevailing narrative, or 'information environment', which is related to a substantial socialization potential by television news. The fact that we even found associations for television content over such a long period offers a more conservative test than looking at content of television news reports only some weeks before the measurement. However, future research would undoubtedly benefit from linking longitudinal media content analysis with longitudinal (panel) survey data.

Third, it is necessary to point out that observational data do not allow us to filter out possible self-selection mechanisms and spurious correlations. However, we did try to reduce possible bias due to self-selection by including control variables, such as education and ideology, which are known to be correlated to both media use and prejudice.

Finally, while we controlled for the consumption by individuals of other news media sources, such as newspapers, news sites and radio, we could not control for the content of these alternative sources. It could be possible that the same respondent received other information regarding tone and framing of the minorities as well, buffering/reinforcing the effects of television news stories.

In summary, we are convinced the present study adds to the understanding of the complex relationship between television news content and target-specific prejudice: it shows that news content on minorities can indeed be considered a powerful contextual factor in explaining differences between minority appraisals. The similarity between minority group evaluations and news depictions of these groups is remarkable. We conclude that television news content cannot

only contribute to overall levels of prejudice, but - in addition - should not be overlooked as a predictor of perceived intergroup differences.

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## **Appendix A. String of search terms in headlines/description and keywords of Electronic News Archive**

The search string in Dutch was: For North-Africans: Marok! OR Libi! OR Algerij! OR Tunesi! OR Egypt! Or Noord-Afrika! OR Berber! OR Maghreb! For Roma: Roma OR Sinti OR Zigeuner! OR woonwagen! For LGBT: Homo! OR bi! OR holebi! OR lesb! OR transseks! OR transgender! OR geaard! OR pride! OR gay! OR out! OR sekse! OR niet hetero. For Jews: Jood! OR Joden! OR Zion! OR chassidis! OR synagoge! OR rabbi! OR holocaust! OR shoah! OR antisemi! OR anti-semi! OR negationis! OR Israël! OR thora! For Eastern Europeans: Oost-Europ! OR Pol! OR Pool! OR Rusland! OR Rus! OR Wit-Rus! OR Oekraïne! OR Oekraïen! OR Let! OR Let! OR Est! OR Litouw! OR Tsjech! OR Slowa! OR Slova! OR Slove! OR Honga! OR Roeme! OR Bulga! OR Moldav! OR Kroa! OR Bosni! OR Montenegr! OR Servi! OR Kosov! OR Alba! OR Geörgi! OR Tsjetsjeni! OR Arme! OR Sovjet! OR Joegosla! OR Oostblok!

The translated search string in English was: For North-Africans: Moroc! OR Liby! OR Alger! OR Tunis! OR Egypt! Or North-Africa! OR Berber! OR Maghreb! For Roma: Roma OR Sinti OR gips! OR caravan! For LGBT: Homosex! OR bisex! OR LGBT! OR lesb! OR transsex! OR transgender! OR orientation! OR pride! OR gay! OR out! OR gender! OR not straight. For Jews: Jew! OR Jews! OR Zion! OR hasidic! OR synagogue! OR rabbi! OR holocaust! OR shoah! OR antisemi! OR anti-semi! OR negationis! OR Israel! OR thora! For Eastern Europeans: Eastern-Europ! OR Pol! OR Pole! OR Russia! OR Russian! OR Belarus! OR Ukrain! OR Ukrainian! OR Latvia! OR Estonia! OR Lithuania! OR Czech! OR Slova! OR Slove! OR Hungar! OR Romani! OR Bulgar! OR Moldov! OR Croatia! OR Bosnia! OR Montenegr! OR Serbia! OR Kosov! OR Albania! OR Georgia! OR Chech! OR Armenia! OR Soviet! OR Yugoslavia! OR Aast!

## Appendix B. Content Analysis: Examples

<b>Roma</b>	<b>News items</b>
Positive tone	‘Exactly one century ago, in a caravan near Charleroi, the gipsy child Django Reinhardt was born. A phenomenal artist.’
Negative tone + cause	‘In Bergen, in the province of Henegouwen, the police has found a large amount of hand guns, rifles and mitraillets in a gipsy camp.’
Negative tone + not cause	‘The young gipsy who was stabbed last weekend by a group of skinheads has told his story for the first time.’
Criminal threat frame	‘Pickpockets on the run with jewels. Public prosecutor and Department of Justice warn for gipsy gang.’
Economic threat frame	‘City administration of Ghent asks inhabitants to not offer help to poor Roma families, because this would encourage more immigration.’
Cultural threat frame	‘The quiet sea-side village Sint-Joris near Nieuwpoort feels overwhelmed by the invasion of evangelic gipsies.’
<b>LGBT</b>	<b>News items</b>
Positive tone	‘In Antwerp, Navigayton has been kicked off, a party marathon for LGBT and their supporters, on and next to the water.’
Negative tone + cause	‘Unsafe sex is a new trend among some seropositive gay men.’
Negative tone + not cause	‘Possibly for the first time in our country, someone was murdered because he was gay.’
Criminal threat frame	‘Justice in Brussels is investigating the case of a marriage of convenience between a dying gay man and a to him unknown woman.’
Economic threat frame	‘Homosexuals and bi-sexuals, on average, are more educated than hetero people, but they earn less.’
Cultural threat frame	‘There are more and more gay boys that start a career in prostitution.’
<b>Eastern Europeans</b>	<b>News items</b>
Positive tone	‘Polish workers are popular in our country.’

Negative tone + cause	‘Eastern European human traffickers sentenced in Dendermonde to prison sentences and fines.’
Negative tone + not cause	‘Contractor and worker receive a fine for bringing a Polish co-worker who fell off the roof too late to the hospital.’
Criminal threat frame	‘Seven Serbians arrested in Sint-Niklaas, the gang was specialized in stealing luxury cars.’
Economic threat frame	‘In Brussels construction workers protested against a EU directive which would lead to a flood of cheap Eastern European workers.’
Cultural threat frame	‘Minister for Integration, Geert Bourgeois, says migrants from Eastern and Central Europe need to integrate better.’
<b>Jews</b>	<b>News items</b>
Positive tone	‘Today the Portuguese-Jewish community in Antwerp celebrates the 100th anniversary of the Beth Mosch synagogue.’
Negative tone + cause	‘After several serious incidents, Minister Dewael, wants to improve the protection of the Jewish community against violence and anti-Semitism.’
Negative tone + not cause	‘The Antwerp diamond centre and several Jewish merchants caused a new scandal due to large amounts of black market money.’
Criminal threat frame	‘The well-known Jewish pastry shop Bloch closes down after 110 years. Five generations of a Jewish family worked in the business. Now it closed down, due to lack of profit.’
Economic threat frame	‘There is a judicial dispute about the presence of the yarmulke in the court by the defendants attorneys.’
Cultural threat frame	‘Some subsidized Jewish schools have received critical remarks from the school inspectorate.’
<b>North-Africans</b>	<b>News items</b>
Positive tone	“The Flemish Culture Prize for performing arts this year goes to the Flemish-Moroccan choreographer Sidi Larbi Cherkaoui.”

Negative tone + cause	“There are tensions in the area surrounding the football stadium of Anderlecht. North-African youth were caught up in a fight with supporters of Anderlecht.”
Negative tone + not cause	“Flemish family maltreats pregnant Moroccan daughter-in-law.”
Criminal threat frame	“Moroccan who was arrested yesterday in Sint-Jans-Molenbeek, was detained by the examining magistrate in Brussels.”
Economic threat frame	“More than half of the Moroccans in our country live under the poverty line.”
Cultural threat frame	“At this moment the Crown Court in Brussels is deliberating upon the sentences in the case of an exorcism of a young Moroccan woman by her family.”

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**Appendix C.** Example of data structure combining content analysis and survey data in a two-level design (level 2 = individual, level 1 = minority group)

ID respondent	News broadcast	Positive feelings (0-100)	Minority group	Gender	Visibility	% Negative tone	% Criminal threat frame
1	Public	60	Jews	Female	151	82.8%	4.0%
1	Public	50	Roma	Female	71	77.5%	54.9%
1	Public	50	Homosexuals	Female	152	52.6%	0.7%
1	Public	50	Eastern Europeans	Female	215	72.1%	56.7%
1	Public	75	North-Africans	Female	144	69.4%	50.7%
2	Commercial	60	Jews	Male	126	90.5%	10.3%
2	Commercial	60	Roma	Male	67	89.6%	65.7%
2	Commercial	40	Homosexuals	Male	175	57.1%	4.0%
2	Commercial	60	Eastern Europeans	Male	262	82.1%	65.6%
2	Commercial	60	North-Africans	Male	124	90.3%	71.0%
3	No news	40	Jews	Male	0	0.0%	0.0%
3	No news	50	Roma	Male	0	0.0%	0.0%
3	No news	50	Homosexuals	Male	0	0.0%	0.0%
3	No news	50	Eastern Europeans	Male	0	0.0%	0.0%
3	No news	40	North-Africans	Male	0	0.0%	0.0%
...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
Level 2	Level 2	Level 1	Level 1	Level 2	Level 1	Level 1	Level 1



